# Rothschild House and Old Fort Townsend CAMP Project Stage 2 – Exploring Alternatives Public Workshop Comments

April 9, 2009

#### **Property Transfer Issues**

- What is the selection process by State Parks Commission to either transfer, mothball or retain full use of State Parks during this budget shortfall?
- State Parks has the experience and training to manage parks and plan for their future. Keep Old Fort Townsend. The economic conditions will improve. Our parks should be preserved for future as a state park system. Finite resource
- Criteria to assess parks (the 2004 matrix) were not developed to assess potential for closure. ALL parks should be assessed by the same criteria developed for closure/transfer
- The Port isn't in the "natural forest" park business could they subcontract a park ranger from state parks to provide that stewardship?
- I think it is essential to keep the park as natural as possible and to keep it in the public domain. However, if it means extending camping, etc to protect natural area, then we need to compromise.
- Deed of right restrictions on 30 acres if transferred to the port?
- Strongly prefer that OFT remain a state park even if you have to mothball it till better times arrive. And they will.
- Transfer is BAD. Port's mission is "economic development" which is very different from what State Parks' mission is. What cards are not being shown by the Port? This is going to still cost the tax payer dollars – so why transfer?
- Land classification outside the campground matrix, we should movie in the direction
  of adding further restrictions (no one should be allowed to hike off the trails due to
  the delicate plants in this fragile ecosystem)
- Transfer out of the system should be the last option not the first option when dealing with state parks closures.
- What is the intent of the Port? If they are not able to write the check every month?
- Add a provision to any transfer to require that if the Port elects at a alter time to stop operating Old Fort Townsend (if it is losing money for example) that the land must return back to State Parks.
- I think it is vital that we maintain the forest as it is with minimal change/'additions i.e. cabins (rustic), small enlarging of RV area. This is the northwest that is known for its beautiful forests.
- As development continues at the rate it has, we are losing this vital identity.
- Can WSP (Washington State Parks) transfer the CE (conservation easement) they hold on PTPC (Port Townsend Paper Co) property to Jefferson Land Trust to ensure long term protection of the conservation values?
- Keep in WSP (Washington State Parks) ownership pursue carbon sale to off set costs – concern that Port of Port Townsend has a different focus and philosophy that could diminish natural park and habitat values – if Port could make it financially viable so could WSP – mothballing is preferable to transfer
- A well organized and managed group of volunteers locally can help immensely in keeping OFT and other parks open.

- Could this transfer possibly end up eventually allowing usage that is not at all in keeping with the excellent protection and preservation of the natural and cultural features that the community enjoys now?
- I like the Port's ideas and sensitivity in maintaining the park's unique ambiance and character. They will continue to protect this natural resource.
- If the Port must relinquish its ownership to another entity, would the new entity be required to respect the restrictions that are in place currently (e.g. Natural Forest area)?

### **Enhancing Recreation Opportunities Alternative**

- Rustic cabins in RV sites instead!
- Let's not enhance recreational opportunities at the expense of maintaining this beautiful park i.e. trees, etc.
- Old Fort Townsend Future I believe in Option B plan i.e. more development and revenue generation: more cabins, more boating, more meetings, and more beach use – the idea is to attract more people to use this beautiful park!
- I like the rustic cabin idea.
- If the State budget requires mothballing, closure or transfer, I support an alternative that favors some measure of enhancing rec opportunities including kayak launching, NO power boats, leaning center, rustic cabins and so on.
- Please do not let boating and public use of beach increase because that would be detrimental to important, significant shoreline habitat that is critical for salmon and many other species. There are other locations on the Quimper Peninsula that are more appropriate for a boat launch.
- I support limited recreational opportunities enhancement. I would like to see an
  enhanced environmental learning center; a water trail kayak/canoe campsite a
  small boat landing area but not a "drive to" power boat launching area; and rustic
  cabins good enhancement
- The Parks purchased a CE (conservation easement) on the neighbor's property to the north that essentially extinguished the development rights. The mill has no intent of selling the land. It also needs to insure that an adequate buffer between recreation activity and the industrial property.

## **Protecting Natural and Cultural Features Alternatives**

- Old Fort Townsend should be kept as is as much as possible. Recreation
  opportunities should be compatible with natural environment. If expansion of
  recreational has to occur, it should be kept to a minimum. Restoration of beach to
  natural state for wildlife (fish, etc.) is my first choice.
- Rothschild House close this house and turn it over to historic society or city. Use the money saved by closing it for keeping Fort Townsend Open.
- Keep natural features as the main priority would fit well with an environmental education center – allow limited expansion of campgrounds to increase revenue – promote use of the existing new building for community events to enhance income
- Is WSP committed to protecting the unique conservation values on this property? If so how will you ensure their protection?

The Old Fort Townsend Park should not be developed into a "for profit" RV park. It is much too special as a natural area. There are almost no state parks left that are real campgrounds instead of paved over RV parking lots that are too expensive and unpleasant for young families in tents. OFT is not so expensive to maintain (volunteers for trails, etc.) and is such a wonderful resource especially for poorer families with children who need a chance to learn about the wonderful native plants, birds, etc and to walk the fabulous trails. There are people of all ages using the park for nature study and a place to burn off stress in a walkable natural area. All day long, all year round there are people using this wonderful park and it should not be closed – especially in these very trying and depressing times when people need a place like this even more! I don't think that the Port of Port Townsend (being a "for profit" agency) is the proper management structure. The park won't stay "natural forest" with them managing it. Frances Campbell.

#### **Other Issues**

- Continue to clarify public misperceptions regarding the Port Townsend Paper Mill property.
- With all the talk about the Port of PT remember that many people as well as Port commissioners, want OFT to remain in WSP ownership! Thank you Peter and Kate for your work including the public in this process.
- What about going back to a parking or use fee? Perhaps a yearly pass like the National Parks to help support the system. With some sort of option for low income people.
- Heritage Site Concerns Bring in college (U of W) groups to excavate old Fort dump sites. Remove and inventory items of historic values – store, save, preserve them before they continue to deteriorate. Yes they are out there! Require the U of W to return those items that they excavated in 1973! Info ask L. Stevens 732-4511
- I am a lifelong democrat and I donate to support Democratic candidates. If I have a choice between a democrat who closes our state parks and a republican that pledges to keep them open I will vote Republican!
- Rothschild House Who or how does the choice, process selection with which theme will be implemented? Transfer issues during this meeting there was no statement about the transferring or closing of the Rothschild House does that mean State Parks will continue ownership? Other Issues Can there be a design mixture of both restoration and rehabilitation? Using the Rothschild as a lifelong learning center is excellent!
- Peter your map does not show the Von Lossen property on the beach which is not part of the Mill's CE (conservation easement). They are very concerned about trespassing and vandalism of their property. Also, we (the Mill) have Homeland Security we have to deal with, so are very concerning about developing the shoreline.